

# **Libby Community Advisory Group**

## **Meeting Summary**

### **June 28, 2001**

#### **Introductions**

Gerald Mueller and the Libby Community Advisory Group (CAG) members present introduced themselves. A list of all of the members in attendance is attached below as Appendix 1. Wendy Thomi introduced a guest, John Wardell, head of EPA's Montana Office.

#### **Agenda**

Mr. Mueller reviewed an agenda for this meeting including the following topics:

- Agency Reports
  - EPA
  - ATSDR
  - Lincoln County
  - St. John's Hospital
- TOSC Report on National Priorities Listing
- Letter to Governor Martz
- Preparation for the EPA Inspector General's July 12 Visit
- Report from Dr. Holian's Program
- Public Comment

#### **EPA Report**

##### EPA Inspector General Visit

Wendy Thomi, EPA Community Involvement Coordinator, stated that EPA Inspector General Nikki Tinsley and two EPA officials, Steve Luftig, Deputy Assistant Administrator for EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response, and Dr. Bill Sanders with EPA's Toxic Substances Program, will be attending the July 12 CAG meeting to address the Inspector General's report and EPA's response to it.

##### Cleanups

Duc Nguyen, EPA On-Scene Coordinator, reported on the cleanups:

- Screening Plant - About 50% of the contaminated soil and debris stored in the long shed at the screening plant has been moved to the mine in about 140 truck loads. The remaining 50% should be moved in one to one and a half months. The long shed will be demolished when the hauling is completed.
- Residential Properties - Removal of contaminated soils and material is occurring at two residential properties, Brown-Lee and Seifkie. An additional four properties have been identified for removal actions this year. EPA has received 340 requests for soil samples at residential properties.
- Schools - The extent of the contamination at Libby High School, Middle School and Plummer Elementary School is understood. To date, 169 samples have been taken at Libby High School and results from them should be received in two weeks. Another 26 samples are planned inside the track area. At Plummer Elementary an additional 35 samples are anticipated. Sampling also has been conducted at Asa Wood Elementary School, Lincoln Central Playground, and the Lincoln County School Administration Building. Six samples, including 4 in the attic and 2 in upstairs rooms were taken at the Administration Building.

*Audience Member Question - You mentioned that sampling at the schools occurred at both the surface and subsurface. How deep were the samples?*

Answer - Surface samples were taken at 0 to 2" depth and subsurface at 2" to 12". Sampling occurred on a 50' grid with 5 point samples in each grid.

*CAG Member Question - What is the nature of the residential cleanup and sampling?*

Answer - At the Brown-Lee property a pile of about 5-7 cubic yards of unexfoliated vermiculite has been removed. The Seifkie property contains equipment and material that was salvaged from the mine and/or processing areas.

*CAG Member Question - Is the material being removed from the residential properties being taken to the mine or the county land fill?*

Answer - The material has been hauled to the mine for disposal. We will have to negotiate with W.R Grace to dispose of additional material from residences at the mine.

*CAG Member Question - EPA has said previously that it will conduct sampling of gardens. When will that happen?*

Answer - Gardens will be sampled in September.

*CAG Member Question - What is the status of the Millwork West buildings?*

Answer - W.R. Grace has agreed to demolish four of the five buildings. W.R. Grace has proposed to leave the planer building after power washing and encapsulating it. The City which owns the buildings wants all five demolished and replaced and new water lines installed. EPA will discuss the fate of the buildings with W.R. Grace in Denver.

*CAG Member Comment - At the last meeting, Les Skramstad brought a bottle of vermiculite that he collected beneath the floor boards of a building at this site.*

Answer - Investigation has not been conducted under the floors. The floors are concrete.

*CAG Member Question - Will EPA oversee removal of the buildings by W.R. Grace?*

Answer - Yes.

*CAG Member Question - Who is negotiating over the disposition of the buildings at the export plant site?*

Answer - EPA is acting as a mediator. W.R. Grace and the City are negotiating.

## **ATSDR Report**

Gerald Mueller reported that Dan Strausbaugh, Montana Representative of ATSDR, is on vacation for two weeks. Mr. Mueller also stated that Sharon Campolucci requested that the following message be read at this meeting:

At the last CAG meeting a question was raised regarding when the CT scan study would be completed. Results will be available to individual participants approximately two to three months after their scan. The complete study report will be available next summer.

## **Lincoln County**

### Rehberg Roundtable

Ron Anderson stated that Congressman Rehberg's office has contacted the County regarding the July 6 roundtable discussion. The discussion will take place from 10:00 a.m. to noon at the high school gymnasium. Its purpose will be to draw out concerns and begin to develop a consensus

regarding possible listing of Libby on the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL). Congressman Rehberg has invited Mayor Berget, Doreen Gullingsrud, president of the Lincoln County Board of Realtors, Mike Munro, owner of Treasure Mountain Casino, Bob Tunis, Sandy Wagner, John Wardell, and Mr. Anderson to participate in the roundtable.

#### Grant Writing Position

Mr. Anderson reported that the County Commission has decided that the County Health Board will be the contracting officer for the grant writing position. He asked that anyone with ideas about the position should get them to the County by July 6.

#### Ambient Air Monitoring

The County is assuming responsibility for ambient air monitoring from EPA. Monitors will continue to be operated every three days on the annex building. If asbestos fibers are detected, weather conditions will be noted.

*CAG Member Question - How was the list of participants in Congressman Rehberg's roundtable selected?*

Answer - The Congressman's staff sought recommendations from local officials for participants who would represent a broad spectrum of community interests.

*CAG Member Question - What is the roundtable purpose and how will it impact the NPL decision?*

Answer by Mr. Anderson - Each invited participant will have three minutes to state her or his views on a listing. I'm not sure about the impact on the decision. We understand the purpose to be soliciting information for the community and beginning a conversation about it.

*CAG Member Comment - I am uncomfortable with the invited roundtable participants. Several have not been involved for the last year and a half, and I don't believe that those invited are representative of the community. The medical community has no representative.*

*Audience Member Comment - It is important that those in the audience also be given an opportunity to participate.*

*Audience Member Comment - Not many people will be able to participate if the roundtable is held from 10:00 a.m. to noon.*

*Comment Sandy Wagner - If people will fax comments or questions to me tomorrow, I will pass them along to the Congressman's office.*

*CAG Member Comment - Maybe we are missing the point with concerns about medical representation on the roundtable. Maybe its purpose is to consider the economic impact on Libby of an NPL listing.*

#### **St. John's Hospital Report**

Pat Cohan reported on behalf of St. John's Hospital and the CARD Clinic. If people participating in the ATSDR CT study have questions about their CT scans and have signed the appropriate release so that the scans can be provided to the hospital, they can make an appointment to discuss their results with Dr. Black.

*CAG Member Question - Could we have an update on the CARD Clinic next meeting?*

Answer - Yes.

### **TOSC Report on Superfund National Priorities Listing**

Kevin Mellott reported to the CAG on the process for and the pros and cons of the Superfund listing. He stated that information about communities that faced a listing decision, including Coalinga, California, Woburn, Massachusetts, and Butte, Montana, can be found at the following web site: [www.epa.gov/superfund/programs](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/programs). He stated that the three examples illustrate that listing can provide significant economic benefits to communities, including economic activity resulting directly from the cleanup, and following completion of the cleanup, new commercial and industrial development activity, jobs, and amenities. Other pros or advantages of a cleanup under an NPL listing include a well-funded and well-known process with ample opportunity for public involvement. NPL cleanups also generate political support. Cons include a possible stigma from identification of the site as contaminated and a slow, sometimes litigious process. Mr. Mellott noted, however, that Libby is already on the NPL because of a contaminated pole treatment facility and that any stigma associated with the asbestos contamination already exists because of the continuing, widespread publicity about it.

*CAG Member Question - Do any of the examples you cited involve long-range, documented health problems?*

Answer - Yes. The Woburn case which involved a hundred years of chemical contamination had leukemia and other cancers and widespread air pollution. Butte has an intense cancer problem.

*CAG Member Question - Did any of your examples include a bankrupt responsible party?*

Answer - In the Brower example, which involved a small landfill, the company that caused the contamination had long ago ceased to exist, and the EPA and the City of Brower conducted the cleanup and subsequent monitoring. In Montana, DEQ is paying for the cleanup of the Zortmann-Landusky mine after the company declared bankruptcy.

*CAG Member Question - What is the time difference between an Emergency Response versus an NPL cleanup?*

Answer - Emergency responses are normally completed within 12 months. NPL cleanups are not time critical.

*CAG Member Comment - I am concerned that the sense of urgency will disappear with an NPL listing. The Libby pole yard cleanup has been proceeding for 15 to 20 years. It would not be good for Libby to remain on the list for 15 to 20 years.*

*Comment by John Wardell - At the Libby pole site, the construction portion of the remedy is complete. A portion of the cleanup involving ground water is continuing, but there is no residual health risk. EPA moves with dispatch whether the cleanup occurs under an Emergency Response or NPL listing. There is no cleanup time difference between the two programs.*

*CAG Member Question - Are the Emergency Response and NPL programs under your jurisdiction?*

Answer by John Wardell - The Emergency Response actions are normally managed out of Region 8 in Denver, and the NPL actions here in Montana, but some overlap occurs.

## **Governor Martz Letter**

Gayla Benefield reported that in a recent newspaper story, Governor Martz was quoted as saying she still has not received from the CAG a list of its priority actions. Ms. Benefield explained that Governor Martz requested a list during a meeting that she and some other Libby people attended. Ms. Benefield suggested that the CAG select some items from the list that the CAG developed back in April (see Appendix 2 to the April 5 CAG Meeting Summary) and presented to Senator Baucus and Gail Gray and Jan Sensibaugh.

*CAG Member Comment - Rather than just a few items, we should send the entire list.*

***CAG Action - The CAG unanimously directed its facilitator to send the April 11 list of priority actions needed to respond to the past and continuing problems arising from the tremolite asbestos contamination of the Libby community.*** (A copy of the letter to Governor Martz is attached as Appendix 2.)

## **Preparation for the Inspector General's July 12 Visit**

Gayla Benefield also requested the CAG to take action to prepare for Ms. Tinsley's visit on July 12. The CAG agreed that its members should re-familiarize themselves with the Office of Inspector General's report on EPA actions in Libby regarding the asbestos contamination prior to the next meeting. It also directed its facilitator to communicate to Ms. Tinsley's office the following suggested outline for her presentation:

- Summary of the report and recommendations;
- EPA's response to the report; and
- Answers to questions raised in the CAG's April 9, 2001 letter to Ms. Tinsley.

## **Report on Dr. Holian's Program**

Leroy Thom summarized information he had received from Dr. Liz Putman who is part of Dr. Holian's group at the University of Montana. Forty-two blood samples have been drawn at the CARD Clinic. Additional samples from present or past Libby residents can be donated on Saturday, August 1, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. About 10 to 15 minutes is need for paper work and 2 minutes to take the blood sample. Additional volunteers are also needed for the lavage sampling. Dr. Holian will be asking for a letter stating the CAG's support for a research grant.

***CAG Action - The CAG unanimously designated Mr. Thom to act as its liaison to Dr. Holian's UM group.***

## **Public Comment**

*CAG Member Comment - CAG members care about the financial as well as the medical well-being of the Libby community.*

*Comment by Gayla Benefield - I will try to arrange to send copies of the recent Deadline Discovery television program on Libby to Montana's Congressional delegation.*

## **Next Meeting**

The next two CAG meetings were scheduled for Thursday, July 12, 2001 and July 26 from 7:00 to

9:00 p.m. in the Ponderosa Room of Libby City Hall.

**Appendix 1**  
**CAG Member Attendance List**  
**June 28, 2001**

<b>Members</b>	<b>Group/Organization Represented</b>
Don Wilkins	Lumber & Sawmill Workers
K.W. Maki	Libby School District #4
Sandy Wagner	Libby Resident
Ron Anderson	Lincoln County
Clinton Maynard	Area Asbestos Research Group
Cyrus Lee	Kootenai Valley Headstart
Wilbur Wilson	Senior Citizens
Bob Dedrick	Asbestos Victim
George Bauer	City of Libby
David F. Latham	The Montanian
Wendy Thomi	EPA Community Involvement
Leroy Thom	Former Grace Employee
Gayla Benefield	LCAVRO
Kerry Beasely	St. John's Hospital
Mike Switzer	Asbestos Victim
Duc Nguyen	EPA On-Scene Coordinator

**Appendix 2**  
**Libby Community Advisory Group**  
**C/O Gerald Mueller**  
**440 Evans**  
**Missoula, MT 59801**

July 5, 2001

The Honorable Judy Martz  
Governor of Montana  
Room 204, State Capitol  
P.O. Box 200801  
Helena, MT 59620-0801

Dear Governor Martz:

A recent newspaper story indicates that you are waiting to receive a list of priority actions requested by the Libby Community Advisory Group (CAG). The purpose of this letter is to provide such a list.

But before doing so, some background on the CAG may be useful. The CAG was formed in February 2000 to provide a conduit for formal and regular communication between the people of the Libby community and EPA. In March 2000, the CAG expanded its purpose to include providing advice and/or recommendations to EPA and others such as Montana's Governor and Congressional delegation. Since its first meeting on February 3, 2000, the CAG has met thirty times, almost twice a month. CAG meetings are open to the public. CAG members are self-selected. Membership is open to members of the Libby and Troy communities who are willing to accept three responsibilities:

- Acting as communication conduit between the EPA and members of the Libby and Troy communities, i.e. sharing information provided by EPA to the CAG with people in the two communities and bringing back to the CAG questions, concerns, rumors, and information from people unwilling or unable to attend CAG meetings;
- Being present at CAG meetings or sending alternates; and
- Being willing to have their names, telephone numbers, and addresses published in the local newspaper(s) so that people from the Libby and Troy communities can contact them.

A list of CAG members is enclosed.

The CAG has adopted the following goal statement for responding to the asbestos cleanup:

A solution for Libby must include:

1. Clean up all contamination and long-term monitoring;
2. Medical monitoring, care, and research;
3. Compensation for victims now and in the future; and
4. Restore business vitality.

At its most recent meeting on June 28, the CAG directed me to send to you the attached list of priority actions needed to respond to the past and continuing problems arising from the tremolite asbestos contamination of the Libby community resulting from the mining and processing vermiculite by W.R. Grace & Co. The CAG regrets not sending this list directly to you.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Gerald Mueller



## **Libby Community Advisory Committee**

### **Priority Actions For Libby Community**

**April 11, 2001**

At its April 5, 2001 meeting, the Libby Community Advisory Committee (CAG) agreed to the following list of priority actions needed to respond to the past and continuing problems arising from the tremolite asbestos contamination of the Libby community resulting from the mining and processing vermiculite by W. R. Grace & Co.

Before listing the actions, the CAG stated its support the EPA Region 8 team that has been conducting emergency cleanup actions in Libby.

The priority actions, together with preliminary cost estimates to implement them, include:

1. Removal and proper disposal of vermiculite insulation from Libby homes and businesses and restoration of these buildings to livable conditions. *Cost - \$12 million (1000 buildings @ \$6,000 for removal and disposal and \$6,000 for restoration).*
2. Development of an asbestos disposal cell at the Lincoln County land fill. *Cost - \$250 thousand.*
3. Approval of the \$650 thousand grant request for the Community Health Center that will provide universal access to primary health care. In addition to the funding for the Center itself, \$1 million is needed for a building to house it. Montana's Senators should also sign the Bond-Hollings letter supporting an increase in federal funding by \$175 million in 2002 for community health centers.
4. Funding for ongoing medical screening. *Cost - \$20-25 million (1,000 screenings per year for 20 years).*
5. Funding for asbestos-related disease research conducted by the Center for Environmental Health Sciences of the University of Montana Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences.
6. Funding for a medical trust to provide continuing medical care for people exposed to asbestos as a result of W.R. Grace vermiculite mining and processing. *Cost - \$500 million for trust principal.*
7. Funding for national advertising of the positive attributes of the Libby area to counteract negative publicity arising from the asbestos problems. *Cost - \$500 thousand.*
8. Convening a Congressional investigation of W.R. Grace's actions in Libby and its transfer of assets to avoid its legal responsibilities to people and communities harmed by its vermiculite mining and processing.
9. Congressional action to block W.R. Grace's recent bankruptcy declaration.
10. Return to the Libby community of W.R. Grace payments to reimburse EPA for clean-up costs of asbestos contamination.
11. Congressional action in response to the EPA Inspector General's report to ensure that EPA's past failures to protect Libby people and environment will not recur.
12. Assistance to ensure that disability designations by the Social Security Administration reflect asbestos exposure problems.



**Libby Community Advisory Group**  
**June 2001**

Ron Anderson, Director  
Lincoln County Env. Health

David Latham, Editor  
The Montanian

Joyce Baeth  
Libby City Council

Cyrus Lee  
Kootenai Valley Headstart

George Bauer  
Libby City Council

Kirby Maki, Superintendant  
Libby School District

Kerry Beasley, Board Chair  
St. Johns Lutheran Hospital

Clinton Maynard  
Area Asbestos Research Group

Gayla Benefield  
Lincoln County Asbestos Victims Relief  
Organization

Rick Palagi, CEO  
St. Johns Lutheran Hospital Inc.

Dr. Brad Black  
Lincoln County Health Officer

Norita Skramstad  
Asbestos Victim

Eileen Carney  
State Representative

Mike Switzer  
Asbestos Victim

Bob Dedrick  
Asbestos Victim

Leroy Thom  
Former Grace Employee

Robert Foote  
Libby United Methodist Church

Bob Tunis, Director  
Lincoln County Economic Development  
Corporation

Kenny Hays  
Senior Citizens (Alternate to Wilbur  
Wilson)

Sandy Wagner  
Libby Resident

George Keck  
Community Health Center

Don Wilkins  
Lumber and Sawmill Workers #2581

Wilbur Wilson, President  
Senior Citizens

oy Community Advisory Group

Gerald Mueller

Evans

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The Honorable Judy Martz

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